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ABSTRACT

Effective managers and professionals in all walks of life have to become skilled in the art of "reading" the situations they are attempting to organize or manage. Ways in which individuals can develop the art of reading and understanding organizational life are presented in this book. It focuses on the premise that all theories of organization and management are based on implicit images or metaphors that lead us to see, understand, and manage organizations in distinctive yet partial ways. Subsequently, each chapter employs metaphor to address different themes. These themes include organizations as mechanisms, as organisms, as brains, as manifestations of cultures, as political systems, as psychic prisons, as flux and transformation, and as instruments of domination. The text explores how each of these metaphors can create new management competencies. Of particular interest to educators is chapter 4: "Learning and Self-Organization: Organizations as Brains" (p.73-118), which describes how to develop new principles for creating "learning organizations" in practice, how new insights from brain research point to new organizational designs, and how corporate culture acts as a kind of "DNA" as it pervades the lives of workers. Other key concepts address how gender, diversity, and the unconscious influence corporate culture, and how to avoid being captured by the latest fashions and trends in management. (Includes an index and approximately 925 references.) (RJM)

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